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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
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SUBJECT: "Blanket Savings"...Information from the textile specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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A bride was bewailing the fact that she couldn't get her blankets cleaned when a more experienced homemaker suggested that she wash them herself. "It's easy to do," she explained, "just throw the blanket in a tub of lukewarm, soap-suddy water... swish it around for a few minutes. Then rinse. It's simple."

A few days later she asked the bride if she'd done her blankets. "Yes," said the bride. "And you were only part right. It is easy to throw blankets in the water. But you didn't tell me how hard it is to take them out."

The bride, of course, had found out something every woman knows...washing blankets is heavy work. But now when most homemakers have the choice of washing their blankets at home or putting them away dirty, many are wisely choosing to wash them. And since fluffy blankets hold warmth better, you'll naturally expect your blankets at least to come out of the ordeal fresh and clean and fluffy.

The textile specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture have some tips on the best way to make them do just that.

First, blankets take lots of lukewarm, soft water with generous suds. Hard water can be softened with an ammonia or borax solution. But you'll want to use the softener cautiously. Too strong an alkali solution may harm the wool. Also, be sure the water is lukewarm throughout the process. One dip in hot or cold water can shrink a blanket forever.

Next, don't soak the blanket. You may have to use two washing waters, but the shorter you can cut the washing time, the better. That old rule about squeezing wet wool rather than rubbing and wringing it holds in this case. When the blanket is clean, rinse it about three times to get all the soap out.

If you can string two lines close together, they'll share the weight and your wet blanket will dry faster over them. To keep the blanket fluffy, squeeze the water from the ends every now and then as it dries. And when you squeeze...give the blanket a few gentle shakes. Your efforts will be well repaid with longer-lived fluffy winter covers.

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